

Arrangement of Configurable Logic Blocks

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates generally to a electronic circuits, and more particularly to an arrangement of configurable logic blocks.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Since their introduction in 1980, Field Programmable Logic Devices (FPLD) have been an integral component for digital circuit implementation. This modern variant for realizing digital circuitry offers great advantages relative to conventional VLSI designs in terms of production costs, short product development for the market (fast market maturity), and favorable system modification.

[0003] These FPLDs also exhibit complex programmable wiring in addition to programmable logic. Therefore, the realization of multi-stage logic is possible. Programmable wiring is typically realized in a corresponding switch matrix, which, however, limits the complexity of the wiring. Recent years, however, have shown especially strong development of applications for Field Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGA) in technological fields associated with FPLDs.

[0004] Because FPGAs allow arbitrarily distributed combinatorial logic circuits to be linked together with complex patterns using sequential circuit parts, this method can produce universal, scaleable circuits. Therefore, it is especially advantageous to design and manufacture user-programmable circuits in this technological field. This can be seen especially clearly in the

state of the art in the tendency of frequent development of microcontrollers and procedure controllers, etc., as FPGAs.

[0005] A distinct number of large manufacturers (e.g., ACTEL, XILINX) have introduced their FPGAs, which can be programmed by the user, as de-facto standards to the market. For these available circuit types, one can define basic structures, for which the FPGAs consist of an array of complex logic blocks. Here, not only the configurations of logic blocks themselves, but also the connections between the logic blocks, can be programmed.

[0006] Thus, in the state of the art, the combinatorial circuit part of a common configurable logic block (CLB) consists of look-up tables (LUT), which are preferably realized by static RAM. Arbitrary combinatorial functions, which are represented by truth tables, are converted into these look-up tables. For these truth tables, one also speaks of function tables, which can be realized by matrix memories and expanded, e.g., by multiplexers, or just by the memories alone.

[0007] The sequential functions of the configurable logic blocks (CLB) are executed by sequential CLB control logic, whose memory elements represent D-FFs. Because the individual CLBs are usually arranged like a grid in FPGAs, the wiring of these CLBs is also grid-like. The programmable wiring of the CLBs mentioned above is realized by switches at the interfaces, e.g., with so-called pass transistors.

[0008] The FPLDs in general and the FPGAs in particular are preferably used for applications in communications technology, in process control technology, for industrial device controllers, etc., because these areas of application are very computation-intensive. On one hand, FPGAs have also gained widespread importance for implementing signal processes and algorithms, because here, these can be executed very effectively as parallel processes. On the other hand, the transformation of such parallel calculations into hardware realized by FPGAs

also means that complex computational and control processes, as represented, e.g., by conditional branches, experience a similarly complex realization in their CLBs.

[0009] For this realization of CLBs, it is obvious that for certain applied cell architectures, which are characterized by frequent applications of standard cell gates (fine-grain), many wiring elements are necessary and/or for frequent use of complex logic (coarse-grain), logic also frequently remains unused. To realize complex user circuits using this FPGA technology, these difficult-to-balance portions of unused logic elements and/or additional wiring elements have a counter tendency to lower the efficiency, which leads to a somewhat higher use of area for the circuit, e.g., relative to comparable VLSI/CPLD realizations.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] In a first aspect, the present invention relates to an arrangement of configurable logic blocks (CLB) in customer-specific circuits, which are realized in Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) technology, wherein the CLBs comprise one or more look-up tables (LUT), a first and/or second multiplexer, and CLB control logic.

[0011] The preferred embodiment of the invention relates to an arrangement of CLBs, which are realized in FPGA technology, and solves the problem according to the invention of minimizing use by adapting its corresponding components to the functional task of the CLB, wherein a CLB contains a first and/or second look-up table, in which the switching function of at least one conditional branch is implemented. Thus, the data input of the CLB is connected via an input data bus on one hand to a corresponding bus input of a first and/or second look-up table and on the other hand at least in parts of the bit width of the input data bus to a corresponding multiplexer control input of the first and/or second multiplexer and also to the first input of the CLB control logic and a control input of the CLB is attached via a control bus to a second input of the CLB control logic. In addition, a corresponding result output of the first and/or second look-up table is associated with the third or fourth input of the CLB control logic and a corresponding register data bus output of the first and/or second look-up table is connected to a corresponding bus input of the first or second multiplexer. One output of the first and/or second multiplexer is connected to a fifth or sixth input of the CLB control logic and an output of the CLB control logic forms an output of the CLB.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0012] For a more complete understanding of the present invention, and the advantages thereof, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which the lone Figure shows the arrangement of a configurable logic block (CLB) implemented according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[0013] The making and using of the presently preferred embodiments are discussed in detail below. It should be appreciated, however, that the present invention provides many applicable inventive concepts that can be embodied in a wide variety of specific contexts. The specific embodiments discussed are merely illustrative of specific ways to make and use the invention, and do not limit the scope of the invention.

[0014] Embodiments of the present invention will first be described by textual description so that some of the concepts and advantages can be understood. A particular implementation of these concepts will then be described with respect to the Figure.

[0015] The preferred embodiment of the invention provides a solution to the problem of minimizing the use of area for configurable logic blocks (CLB) and is achieved by adapting its corresponding components to the functional task of the CLB. Thus, in the solution of the problem according to embodiments of the invention, a CLB contains a first and/or second look-up table with content addressability, which implements the switching function of at least one conditional branch. This conditional branch generates an "if then else" branch, which realizes a comparison of CLB input data with comparison data previously stored in the CLB.

[0016] Here, the data input of the CLB is connected via an input data bus on one hand to a corresponding bus input of a first and/or second look-up table and on the other hand at least in one part of the bit width of the input data bus to a corresponding multiplexer control input of the first and/or second multiplexer and also to the first input of the CLB control logic. Furthermore, a control input of the CLB is connected over a control bus to a second input of the CLB control logic.

[0017] In addition, a corresponding result output of the first and/or second look-up table is assigned to the third or fourth input of the CLB control logic and a corresponding register data bus output of the first and/or second look-up table is connected over a first and/or register data bus to a corresponding bus input of the first or second multiplexer. One output of the first and/or second multiplexer is connected to a fifth or sixth input of the CLB control logic and one output of the CLB control logic forms an output of the CLB.

[0018] Thus, this solution according to the preferred embodiment of the invention has the goal of preventing the use of three otherwise additional conventional LUTs in a CLB through the implementation of a conditional branch with its corresponding switching function in a special LUT. In this way, a considerable portion of the surface area required by the FPGAs is spared for the realization of the user-specific circuit.

[0019] In one special configuration of the solution of the problem according to embodiments of the invention, the first and/or second look-up table (LUT) is realized with the conditional branch implemented in it through such a switching function, and these first and/or second look-up tables each contain a first or second register, in which the corresponding comparison datum is stored. Furthermore, the LUTs each have a first or second comparator comparing the input data with the stored comparison data, wherein the corresponding bus input of the first and/or second look-up table is connected to a corresponding first bus input of the first or second comparator.

[0020] A corresponding bus output of the first and/or second register is connected to a corresponding second bus input of the first or second comparator and also to the corresponding register data bus output of the first and/or second look-up table. In addition, a corresponding

output of the first and/or second comparator is switched with the corresponding result output of the first and/or second look-up table.

[0021] This special configuration of the solution according to embodiments of the invention shows its advantage in that for the implementation of more than one conditional branch in an LUT, an additional savings of hardware resources is achieved by reducing the required CLBs. In addition, here it is favorably guaranteed that the comparison data, which are stored in the LUT and which are required for processing with the CLB controller, are also simultaneously already available for further processing in typical multiplexers of a CLB. Therefore, additional hardware, which would otherwise be necessary, is likewise spared for each CLB that is used.

[0022] A particular implementation of the invention will now be explained in more detail in the following with reference to the Figure. The associated drawing shows the arrangement of the CLB 9 with the first and second look-up tables (LUT) 2; 12 implemented according to one embodiment of the invention.

[0023] This drawing shows the CLB 9, which includes the first and second LUT 2; 12 and also the first and second multiplexer 3; 13, and the CLB control logic 8, wherein within the first and second LUT 2; 12 are first and second registers 4; 14 and also first and second comparators 6; 16, respectively.

[0024] From the data input 1 of the CLB 9, the resulting data are led via the input data bus 7 to the corresponding bus input of the first or second LUT 2; 12 and thus to the corresponding first bus input of the first or second comparator 6; 16. Simultaneously, these data are led in one part of the bit width of the input data bus 7 to the corresponding multiplexer control input of the first and/or second multiplexer 3; 13 and also to the first input of the CLB control logic 8. From

the control input 10 of the CLB 9, the control data are led over the control data bus 7 to the second input of the CLB control logic 8.

[0025] The corresponding comparison data, which are stored in the first or second register 4; 14, are applied to the corresponding second bus input of the first or second comparator 6; 16. These data are likewise led to the register data bus output of the first and/or second look-up table 2; 12 and are switched over a corresponding first or second register data bus 5; 15 to the bus input of the first or second multiplexer 3; 13.

[0026] The result of the corresponding comparison of the resulting input data with the stored comparison data is output on the output of the first or second comparator 6; 16 and is led over the corresponding result output of the first and/or second look-up table 2; 12 to the third or fourth input of the CLB logic 8. The signal applied to the corresponding output of the first or second multiplexer 3; 13 is made available on the fifth or sixth input of the CLB control logic 8. Its output signal is switched to the data output 11 of the CLB 9.

[0027] Table 1 provides a list of the reference numerals used in the Figure and the corresponding element of the illustrated embodiment.

Table 1

1	Data input
2	First look-up table (LUT)
3	First multiplexer
4	First register
5	First register data bus
6	First comparator

7	Input data bus
8	CLB control logic
9	CLB (configurable logic block)
10	Control input
11	Data output
12	Second look-up table (LUT)
13	Second multiplexer
14	Second register
15	Second register data bus
16	Second comparator
17	Control data bus

[0028] In one aspect, the present invention provides an arrangement of configurable logic blocks (CLB) in customer-specific circuits, which are realized in Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA) technology, wherein the CLBs comprise one or more look-up tables (LUT), a first and/or second multiplexer, and a CLB control logic, characterized in that a CLB (9) contains a first and/or second look-up table (2), (12), in which the switching function of at least one conditional branch is implemented with content addressability, which generates an "if then else" branch, which realizes a comparison of input data of the CLB (9) with comparison data previously stored in the LUT, wherein the data input (1) of the CLB (9) is connected via an input data bus (7) on one hand to a corresponding bus input of a first and/or second look-up table (2), (12) and on the other hand at least in one part of the bit width of the input data bus (7) to a corresponding multiplexer control input of the first and/or second multiplexer (3), (13), and also to a first input of the CLB control logic (8); a control input (10) of the CLB (9) is attached over a

control bus (17) to a second input of the CLB control logic (8); a corresponding result output of the first and/or second look-up table (2), (12) is assigned to the third or fourth input of the CLB control logic (8); a corresponding register data bus output of the first and/or second look-up table (2), (12) is connected over a first and/or second register data bus (5), (15) to a corresponding bus input of the first or second multiplexer (3), (13); an output of the first and/or second multiplexer (3), (13) is connected to a fifth or sixth input of the CLB control logic (8); and an output of the CLB control logic (8) forms an output of the CLB (9).

[0029] For example, this arrangement can be characterized in that the first and/or second look-up table (2), (12) is realized with the conditional branch implemented in it by such a switching function, for which these first and/or second look-up tables (2), (12) each contain a first or second register (4), (14), which stores the corresponding comparison data, and each table further has a first or second comparator (6), (16) comparing the input data with the stored comparison data, wherein the corresponding bus input of the first and/or second look-up table (2), (12) is connected to a corresponding first bus input of the first or second comparator (6), (16) and a corresponding bus output of the first and/or second register (4), (14) is connected to a corresponding second bus input of the first or second comparator (6), (16), and also to the corresponding register data bus output of the first and/or second look-up table (2), (12), and a corresponding output of the first and/or second comparator (6), (16) is switched with the corresponding result output of the first and/or second look-up table (2), (12).

[0030] While this invention has been described with reference to illustrative embodiments, this description is not intended to be construed in a limiting sense. Various modifications and combinations of the illustrative embodiments, as well as other embodiments of the invention,

will be apparent to persons skilled in the art upon reference to the description. It is therefore intended that the appended claims encompass any such modifications or embodiments.